

Hallmarks 2015





*A Literary Magazine
Upper School • Harpeth Hall*

Hallmarks 2015

**The Harpeth Hall School
3801 Hobbs Road
Nashville, TN 37215**

*cover photograph by Evie Witty
intaglio print (opposite) by Margaret Gaw*

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Childhood



It may seem predictable that we begin this year's edition with a section on childhood, but the truth is that childhood is the basis—the very beginning—of a writer's consciousness. Our dreams, our fears, our hopes so often spring from indelible moments that occur before our words can begin to make sense of them. So the “book unread” that Hannah Huth alludes to is just that; whether with crayon or ink, the story must be told. “Pulp,” for example, gives a dual perspective—of an elementary school youngster and her older incarnation—who understands the pain of going without. These pieces usher us into the next stage.

Child of Mine

Hannah Huth

child of mine
don't look too far ahead
what is in front of you
is the most glorious book unread.

*gouache on paper (above) by Alison Rust
mixed media (opposite) by Anna Leigh Turner*



Pulp

Anonymous

On Sunday evening we went to St. Stephen's.

St. Stephen's had everything: clothes, CDs, shelf after shelf of tins hugged in clean labels. That night I marched out of the church, victoriously toting a plastic bag filled with my newly claimed clothing and magazines and sporting my uniform of a striped shirt and khaki held up by Dad's old belt. Upon arriving home, my brother and I spread out our new items in careful arrays across the linoleum kitchen floor. I had managed to find the latest edition of *People*, and sat contentedly, memorizing each page. I made a game out of it, trying to study each paragraph before covering up the words and reciting it back to myself.

The game continued well into the night, until the clock read 9:01, and I was lying in bed, hands still clutching at the glossy pages. The faces gleaming back at me were in movies about underdogs and slumdogs. I lived like them, the underdogs. Underdogs' homes were rickety like mine and underdogs' clothes were hand-me-downs like mine. None of my friends were underdogs. They all had clothes from Macy's and houses that slept lethargically behind landscaping and wrought iron gates. I felt unique in my two-sizes-too-big polo shirts, and I carried my first grader self with a pinch of gawky overconfidence. I fell asleep with my magazine in hand, contented. Life was nice.

Life got even nicer on Monday morning, when Mom came in my room and presented me with a shirt she had found in the bins of St. Stephen's the night prior. It had the band Pulp's logo printed on across the front, the faded letters



digital media by Jayne Stuart Garber

feebly holding their ground. But more importantly, the t-shirt was my favorite color: purple. It was the color of kings and queens, and I wore it as such. At school that day I was the lioness queen of the madhouse jungle hallways, walking coolly along in rubber Converse and my new, regal attire.

At the final ring of the school bell, the halls flooded with the subjects of my domain—the shifty-eyed antelope, the harmless, bumbling elephants, and flamboyant, squawking treetop birds. One girl in particular, Ruth, always screeched in a pitch higher than the rest, with eyes that flashed a predatory jolt at those who didn't screech along with her. She decided to perch herself by my locker that afternoon. As I passed by, Ruth craned her neck, grabbed me by the sleeve, and jeered.

“Nice shirt.”

Her mouth was curled into a smirk, and her voice oozed past her lips. I looked around and saw my classmates cover their smiles with their hands, saccharine red blush on their cheeks—the remnants of their mocking laughs. I looked over at my friend Carlos—my oldest friend, my dearest friend—and my heart plummeted down into my stomach, hitting at an impact of 100 miles per hour. I stood queasy.

It wasn't the laughs of my classmates, nor was it Ruth's voice (though the very sound of it was the definition of disdain) that sent my heart crashing. It wasn't them at all. It was Carlos. Carlos's eyes were filled with kindness and friendship ... and *charity*.

I slunk past Ruth and the gathering crowd, steering far away from my friend for fear his very touch would further reduce me down to a groveling pauper. I didn't need his charity. Crashing shoulders-first into the school doors, I ran out into the parking lot and held a staring contest with the lines in the pavement. I didn't dare look out at the cars passing me, full of passengers with their eyes full of pity for the girl walking home in the stained purple shirt and the too-big blue jean skirt. I felt slain.

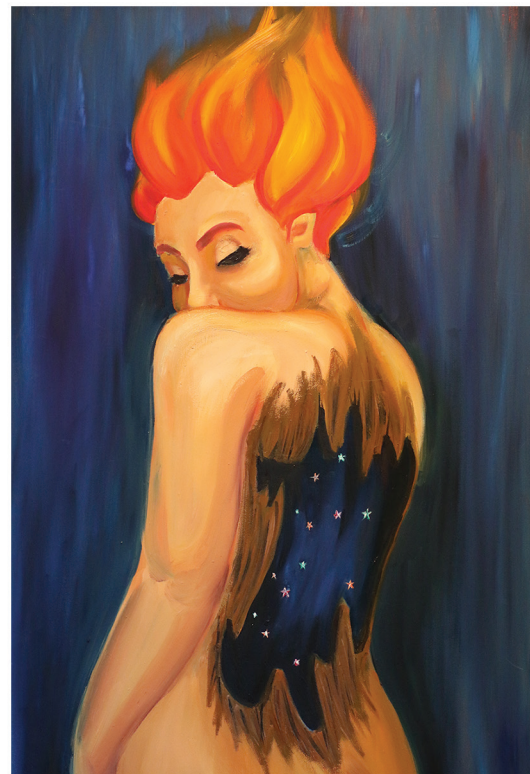
Now I was an underdog for real—or maybe just a dog: a dog like the ones that roamed around skittishly in Dollar Tree parking lots, ears flattened with the weight of their own humiliation as families in big cars tossed food for them onto the oily asphalt. *Charity*.

I grew ever more aware of my shirt. Each step I took only increased the royal hue until it glowed in my eyes, down the streets, and into the faces of every person that passed me. I looked down at the logo. I didn't even *like* the Pulp. I *hated* Pulp. I didn't ask for the ugly t-shirt, anyway. It was someone else's, with someone else's holes in the sleeve and someone else's ketchup stain near the hem. Maybe they hadn't wanted it, either. Maybe their mom gave it to them, and they threw it out in

the donation bin at St. Stephen's. I was wearing a give-away shirt.

Mom hadn't given me a gift; she had given me a label. I felt like pulp, like the stringy clouds at the bottom of orange juice cartons. I was a sight to be seen, the shameful hand-me-down kid, like a trodden orange being dragged along the sidewalk, leaving behind a miserable trail of pulp.

At home I opened the drawer to my dresser, peered inside, and immediately slammed it back, too afraid to change out of (much less acknowledge) the royal-purple mark of shame I bore. There was no one home, yet I was not alone; I still felt pitying eyes gazing at me with maternal condescendence, hands beckoning me to receive their offerings of aid. I couldn't handle eyes, not even my own, so I closed them tightly and covered them with my balled-up fists. I gingerly pushed the latest addition of *People* under my bed with my foot, just enough so that Angelina Jolie wasn't looking back at me.



I Love the Stars Too Fondly

Ashley Zhu

I have always had an infatuation with stars, but I guess my love for them started in elementary school. In second grade, my teacher gave out glow-in-the-dark stars as a goodbye gift to her students. After school, during the busy carpool, I dodged between the honking cars, and jumped into the car, gasping to my mom about how awesome the last day of school was. That same night, I stuck my special little star onto my ceiling and promptly forgot about it.

It wasn't until the next night that I was surprised by this magical light above my bed, and for several years onward, it brightened up my room, quite literally. Even when my childhood night light ran out of battery, and my parents decided it was time for me to stop having one, that one small star made it alright. The star has followed me through adolescence. When I got a new room, I ripped that star off the ceiling, leaving a star-shaped mark. The stickiness on its back was gone, so on my new ceiling I used double-sided tape and stuck it on.

I remember one night, I went over to my friend Hannah's house for a sleepover. After we finished playing the typical sleepover games, she turned out the lights, and I found out she had a galaxy on her ceiling. There were small twinkling stars and large shooting ones that expanded across her entire bedroom ceiling. However, this didn't bother me. To me, my star shone brighter than all of her stars because I have never believed that stars were meant to be counted.

There is a poem called "The Old Astronomer to His Pupil" by Sarah Williams, where she writes, "I loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night." I am a contemplative night owl, and most of my nights are spent staring up at the ceiling wondering about the beyond. As I ponder, the star comforts me and soothes my fears of the night. The magic light in the darkness symbolizes luminous unknown discovery and childhood dreams that I never got over.

oil on canvas (opposite) by Briley Newell



Sundials

Lizzy Asad

The sticky sweetness of summer lingered in the air. The cold blue linoleum and white popcorn walls witnessed the wails of fresh pressed children. The unforgiving clock ticked, tocked, ticked ... it was the first day of second grade.

I hugged my mom goodbye and went to sit in my assigned seat. My pink pastel dress greeted the chair in waves while my black Mary Janes skimmed the floor. From my new Hannah Montana backpack, I plucked three miniature perfect plastic pets.

“Are those Littlest Pet Shops?”

I looked up to see a girl with wide brown eyes and a magnificent lemon bow perched on her hair.

“... yes?”

She took out a Littlest Pet Shop from her overalls pocket. We shared a smile of a thousand sun rays. The school bell shrilled and the clock ticked, tocked, ticked.

Her name was McKenzie Smith, and we were destined to be best friends forever. We created kingdoms of trinkets, read until the words scared us away from the page, and braved the cafeteria yogurt. We pinky promised our secrets, laughed until air escaped our eight-year-old lungs, and withstood the horrors of elementary school together.

The sun soothed our backs as we climbed on top of the monkey bars, the wind brushing our hair as the sky presented the agenda of the universe. The warmth of friendship remained as the clock ticked, tocked, ticked....

It was one of our final days at Harpeth Valley Elementary. The sticky sweetness of summer arrived in the air on the last day I ever saw McKenzie. I remember hearing the sounds of recess—the shrieks of the swings, the crunch of mulch, the sputter of the slide—as she told me how she was moving to Illinois the following weekend. We promised to call each other every other day. We promised to send letters. We promised to remain the best friends forever we were destined to be.

The taste of tears chilled as the clock ticked, tocked, ticked.

I found a new home at a school called Harpeth Hall, and McKenzie made the five-hour trek to Illinois. Our calls began to dwindle, our addresses were forgotten, and our friendship faded into the past. To this day, little snatches of our memories still buzz in my head. I regret not keeping up with McKenzie, and often wonder what became of my ex-best friend.

I remember the burning feeling of metal under my fingertips. I remember the pleasant kindness from the sun. I remember how the blue sky filled my eyes.

I remember the girls with sunlit souls as the clock ticked, tocked, ticked....



silkscreen by Isabel Kennon

Playthings

Ashley Zhu

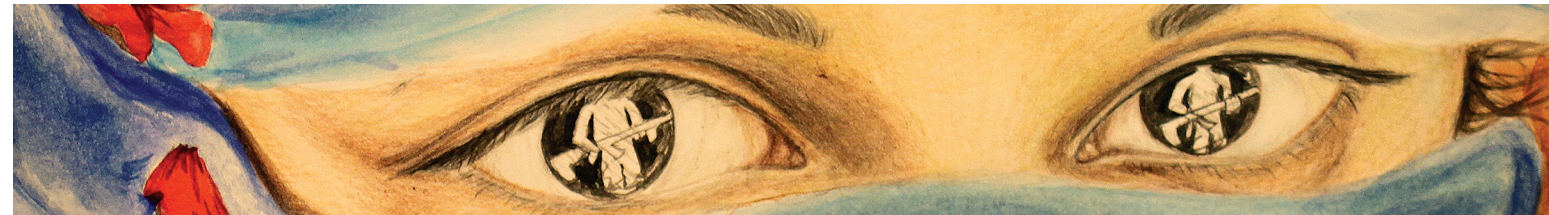
We are Hungry, Hungry Hippos.
 Mouths open, searching
 searching for sustenance to feed on;
 little children
 play with the white little balls in our mouths
 glistening like our white little lies,
 silver sneakers; we put on our
 look-alike plastic American Girl dolls (custom made, of course)
 falling,
 falling
 like Jenga blocks
 because there will always be
 something missing.
 We pull out the pieces one by one—
 global fire, one,
 warming, two,
 melting, three
 ripping apart
 still hoping
 the world will not fall down.
 We are hungry, hungry hippos.
 Devouring
 everything
 everything
 but the dead.



watercolor, ink, and colored pencil (detail—above and opposite) by Sadie Petraitis

World at large

As we move out of childhood, we find ourselves facing the world ahead of us: the world at large. We must grapple with relationships, ambitions, desires, or even a legacy of injustice. Readers are presented with a four-day entanglement with a circus laborer in “Grease Monkey,” a menacing threat in “Burned,” a culinary rebellion in “The Chef,” the ambiguity of a soldier’s return in “The Platform,” and, most weighty and troubling of all, the Holocaust from a child’s perspective. In short, in this section, the writers’ encounters challenge their hopes and expectations. Heroes fall (as in Phoebe Powers’s poem about an encounter with Babe Ruth), and situations prove to be by turns unpredictable, problematic, promising, ridiculous, terrifying, or fundamentally unfair.



The Platform

Lauryn McSpadden

There were a lot of things she could have been doing at the time—better things, much better than standing at the edge of a platform with a handful of petunias and waiting for an unknown. Yet, she had found herself rumbling down the highway in her rusty old pickup and making her way towards the station. As she stood on the platform, her feet only a few inches away from the tracks, she wondered who would walk off that train. Every year, he was a different person—as if the torrential sandstorms of the Middle East had grated his skin so much that every time she saw him, she was confronted with a new man. Layers of him were lost in the dust of the desert. And at every reunion, she could see her dear soldier was getting smaller and smaller.

The Chef

Kelsey Kay Herring

He had ordered me to deliver the food to the party down the street. The filleted salmon stunk up my back seat, and I could almost feel the ice-cream melting in their containers.

This is not where I imagined I would be, surrounded by food but not cooking any of it. The closest I've ever actually gotten to the food is the hard wooden crates they are packed in. The ones that say "Do not touch." I do not touch the food. I never touch it.

I told my parents that dropping out of college to become a chef was a brave and original idea. I could open my own restaurant, and besides, girls loved a guy who could cook. My family was never on board though, and after I had made my final decision, they took their support, and their money, and disappeared. They believed that the world needed more doctors, not more mouth-watering grilled cheeses. But they've never tasted mine.

I wonder what they would think of me now. A single guy, driving a delivery truck. Their "I told you so's" rang in my head.

As I pulled up to the restaurant, prepared to unload and unpack, I rested my head on the steering wheel. Do all dreams start out like this? Like a false start?

I circled the truck until I was at the back, opening the trunk as the crates stacked high began to wobble. I steadied them with my hand, gray dust coating the palm. I reached and placed each one on the parking lot concrete, waiting for someone at the party to come greet me. Staring at the boxes, my eyes started to water. The "Do not touch" command swirled around in my brain until it became a chant, a cheer, a mantra.

I dropped out of school to deliver boxes that ordered me around. I stood up, and the cheer faded in intensity. I opened the crate, and the chant became a background hum. I picked up the crate and the mantra became one, single line.

And I dumped the crate out. The food splattered across the hot asphalt, and I watched as the different parts of the salads, sandwiches, and dessert scattered across the ground below me. I clenched my fist.

"Do not touch" flooded my brain.

I began picking up box after box and turning them over until the entire delivery was spread out like some kind of sick buffet. There were no more crates of food that I had not ruined. That I had not touched. I squashed some of the grapes that had yet to be destroyed, and I stood in the middle of my masterpiece, breathing heavily.

A door on the side of the building opened. A small man walked out. He stared at the pile of food surrounding my feet, and then looked back up at me.

"Wait... is that mess... my food? Are you the delivery guy?" He questioned, panic visible.

I paused, staring at the smashed crates and demolished catering.

"No."

Papa and Babe Ruth

Phoebe Powers



My grandfather met Babe Ruth once.
When his was a boy, there was a parade
Proceeding down 42nd street one morning.
Dozens of hazardous, metal floats
Rolled across the hot pavement.
But of all the floats, my grandfather's eyes
Stayed instinctively fixated on just one.
Amidst the festivities, one platform
Held Babe Ruth, who was
Tossing off little cardboard baseballs

With the Yankee logo emblazoned on the side.
Without thinking, my grandfather
Bolted towards the float.
Hopping on the back of the moving platform,
He hoped to obtain a ball autographed by Babe himself.

In a daze, dumbfounded by the presence of his deity,
My grandfather shyly began to extend
His chubby little hand to receive a baseball...
“HEY KID, GET DOWN FROM THERE!!”
Yelled Babe with such force
That my grandfather fell back, off of the float, flat onto the street.
Hopeless and baseball-less, my grandfather limped home.

Grease Monkey

Julia Allen

The circus is in town, but only for four days. It always comes during this time of year, and it throws the children into an excited frenzy. They waste no time at all, gathering spare change and begging their parents for cotton candy that they know will be the best on earth. And who could blame them? It is surely a spectacle—the circus, not the children—so much color and motion and sound. As far as anyone knows, this show is alive and well, alive and moving, alive and producing. But there is one catch—it smells absolutely dreadful.

The menagerie reeks, but not due to the animals inside. Food sold by vendors nearby would be an educated second guess, but it is the inhabitants of the site that produce the odor. Although they are willed for whimsy, these workers keep a well-oiled machine running. The objective of this machine is simple: to suck in kilowatt hours and ooze out money.

You can smell the monkeys before you see them. Their aroma is rank, their sweat glistening, and their hands rough. They lather themselves in grease. When the gears jam, they keep the machine from stalling. They turn their monkey wrenches. They are here to work. They are here to work. They are here to work. They make sure the machine never stops running.

I met him in the sea of manufacturing, both of us trying to keep the mechanical leviathan satisfied. He was a laborer with his shirt sleeves rolled up, trying to hold screws in place. He was always moving, shoving, fighting to stay at the front of the long lines. He shook hands with dirt caked beneath his fingernails.

I would never be able to tell him, “I’m sorry.”

His teeth were crooked. He fidgeted incessantly and was loud enough to drown out the screeches of the chimpanzees. His eyes burned like coals when he looked at me, his hair the blackened color of soot. He was nothing more than another hand, another greased body. He smelled worse than any other menial, and he was coated in grime.

I was just like him.

For four days, I kept the cogs in revolution. He didn’t care where he was in line. The children got their cotton candy, and they believed it was the best on earth. They never saw the machine, but it kept moving. It kept moving. It kept ... moving until every last rotten penny could be squeezed out. I laughed when the coins stained my fingers.

The stench was absolutely horrific, but I didn’t care. The metal giant roared, but the monkey’s shrieks subsided. The hands that I held had dirt-caked fingernails. Crooked teeth smiled at me. I was nothing more than another oil-smeared hand, and I was laughing at a boy who had grease in his hair. For four days, we kept that foul machine running. And as the gears kept spinning, I pretended to love him.

But he loved me.



photograph by Taylor Farrington

Burned

Marimac McRae

The field had become a common place to run. We were about to run the first lap. Most 5ks are measured in kilometers, or maybe three miles and a killer final tenth, but here you measure the 5k in laps. The first lap. The second lap. And the larger, uphill third lap. We knew the route around the field from experience, and we knew this run was not going to be easy. I doubted our ability to complete the third lap fully because my friend and I were alone and prone to giving up too early. We began by warming up, looking for motivation, eyeing the sketchy three black cars in the middle of the field. Talking. A timid sense lingered in the air, but nothing too stirring.

For a while they were as vacant and silent as coal: appearing calm to disguise buzzing heat. The kind of heat that you don't want to touch, that you don't want to stare down straight in its non-blinking headlights, ripping up grass as your hairs stand on end, while you're looking at this hurtling ball of black heat coming at you.

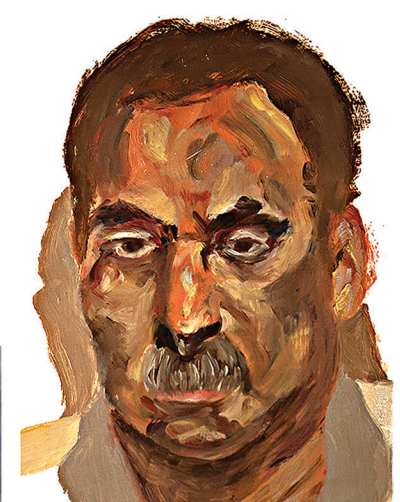
The fear was as blinding as white light. I have never been so disappointed in my legs in my entire life. No amount of effort made me far enough from the car behind me. We could have just stood still (it felt like we were). We had come here to run for fun, not be chased.

It will haunt me forever. When I think of this chase, I think of looking over my shoulder. I think of stopping to close a gate. I think of looking, and seeing, and tinted windows and tinted men and outlines of people who look like dead, ash-gray ghosts, and I remember sparkling white spinning tires, and I remember a hum, and I remember eye contact. You don't need to be able to see distinct eyes to feel eye contact. He drove a car into my eyes right then.

The rest of it is blurry in my memory, like a pall of confusion rests on the following events, like a tinted window covers this wretched memory. A scream for help, a phone call, a fence hopped, an engine silenced, and the sarcastic retreat of the car that chased us just to chase us.

oil paint on canvas (opposite & clockwise from the top left) by Maddie Gilmore, Emily Warren, Abbey Snow, and Dasha Didier

Running down a road nobody drives on, next to the fence from old oak trees that see and never speak, we finally got to the busy road that brought us our closure. We don't know why tire marks covered our frantic footprints, or what they wanted, or who they were, or any of the questions our heartbeats drummed out into our spinning heads; we did not know the answers. But we readily welcomed that it was over. Except, as we hugged each other, something inside us remained unstable, remained unthinking, remained running.



"His job is to fix other people's things without worrying about fixing his own."

Margaret Gaw

The Chosen People

Vivian Herzog

They told me we were different, that we would have to leave. I never knew why they chose us—I just know that Ima’s eyes seem different when she looks at me now.

They told me that I had to leave my pretty house with the flowers on the sill—the one where Abba painted my ceiling like the sky, with stars and planets and constellations meant only for my eyes; the one with the sunlit kitchen where Ima cooked away, baking loaves of challah and sneaking my sister chocolates from under our small sink.

I was excited: I had never ridden on a train before. But I soon found out that this is no vacation.

I still sleep in a bunk bed, just like at home, but now instead of one beneath me there are twelve. Now instead of my own nightscape above me, I see only rotting wood. Now instead of chocolates, I taste stale crumbs.

I don’t know if Abba has painted any more ceilings. But why would I? I haven’t seen him in three weeks.

Ima still bakes her special challah, but she makes it only for the scary men in the fancy uniforms because they say they like the way she looks.

The way she looks. The way we look. Different.

That’s what got us here in the first place.

But I don’t feel different.

I don’t feel anything anymore.

black and white monoprint (opposite) by Erica Spear



I Travel to Dig

Keely Hendricks

I travel to dig—
I want to root out history, a beating heart, hieroglyphs,
From the relentless ground
Pick out the earth with my fingers, let them get dirty
As I smooth over a king's decree, or his concubine's bones.
I'm envious of those who took long, deep breaths in King Tut's tomb
And let their lungs fill up—
To be killed by a Pharaoh's curse is brutally royal!

I travel to be transformed—
I embrace Conrad's nightmare, descending into a heart of darkness
Where cocky youth lights a torch;
The jungle is an animalistic mother, and I become savage to please her.
Sucking on lemons along the trail, my face striped with primal red smears,

I shed my modernity for the rugged heroism of my ancestors.
The constant beating of rain, of drums, drowns me inside my ears
Guillén's rhythms rage in my chest like a feral heartbeat
;Mayombé-bombe-mayombé!

I travel to be haunted—
To meet the dark faces I've only seen in National Geographics;
I see generations hiding in the ebony tides of their eyes.
When I'm holding the young ones, letting them stare at my blached arms,
I already envision them as mothers, painted in dark *jagua*,
Bare-footed and shooing wild dogs;
They are more than living artifacts—a museum for the 21st century American—
But it plagues me, the elders' stoicism:
When I ask about their people's future, their eyes swell
With dignity, or else disgrace.

digitized wet process double exposure photograph by Marguerite Trost



section 3

Perspectives

We observe the world around us through our limited, though varied, perspectives. We take in piece after piece offered to us through life experiences, and use them to mold our vision. And through this, as Leah Portis states in “Letters,” we might just discover we have the world inside of us, too.

photograph by Paige Derwenskus

Letters

Leah Portis

in russian, мир means
“world”
and
“peace”
at the same time

and i think that’s the most
beautiful
thing i’ve ever learned

to know that three letters can sum
up the entirety of the concepts of “peace”
and “world”

it’s comforting
because if peace and world can exist in three letters, then whatever is inside of me
can certainly exist in 26 or 37 or maybe 874—

this jumble of crushes and kisses and songs and sadness
and joy and love can have letters assigned to it
and maybe if they are,

i’ll discover i have the world inside of me too

Subsequent Neptune

Ella McKenzie

I'm a seafoam nothing in an aqua world
with nothing around and nothing to follow
and everything lives up above and the seagulls
drop it on me, drop it on me,
and my tsunami hands are stained by the salt
and I live on an island
under the sea.

I make lavender rise from the seafoam sometimes,
a magical mystery storm
that runs in the sky like a royal parabola
and falls and crashes into the sea
and no one can blame it on me,

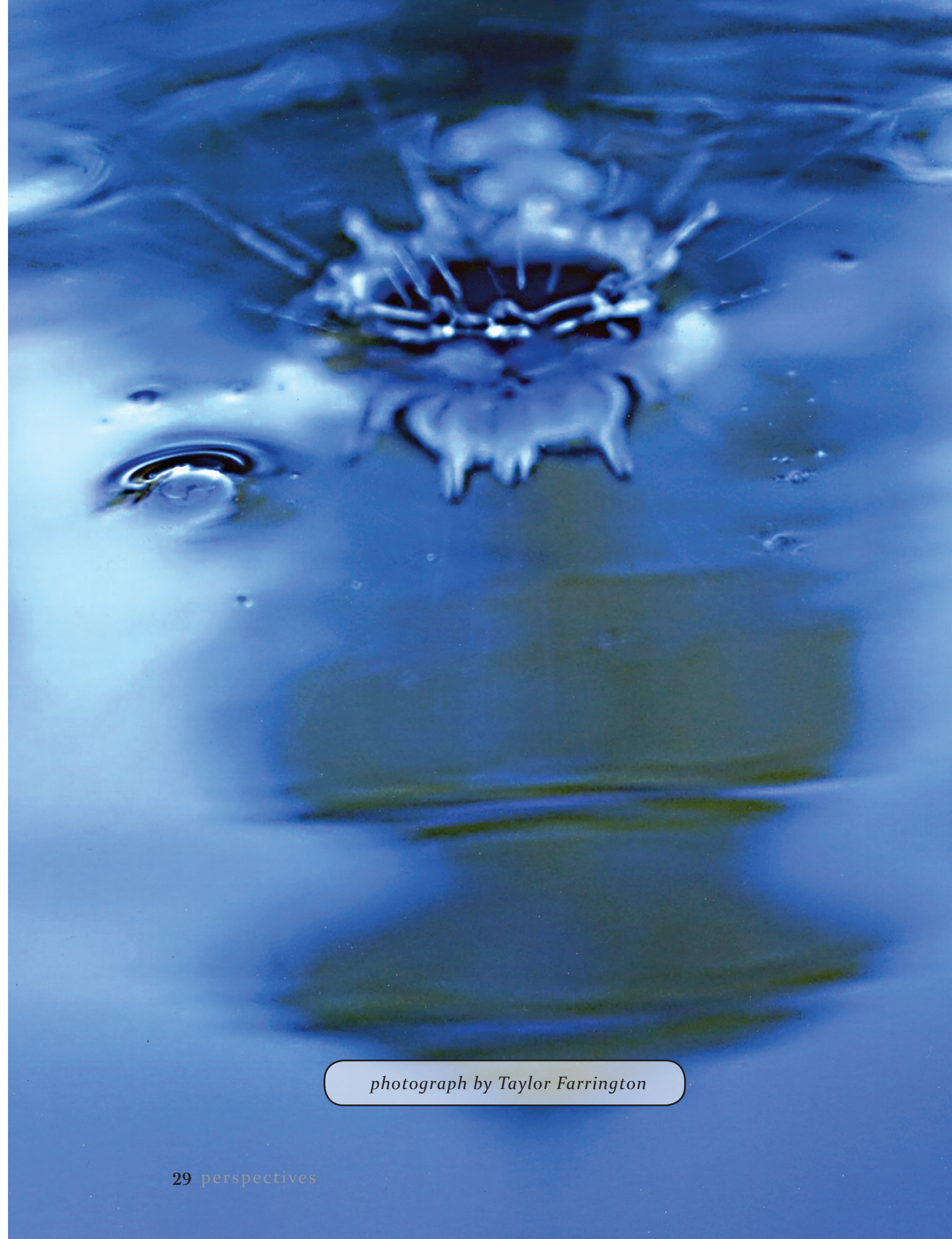
because I'm just a bubbling nothing down here,
a mermaid, a merman, a maritime scarlet,
a harlot, a queen, a funeral march,
and the waves of my water rip paper apart,
and the fish float away
like a fly from the darkness.

Everything moves through the water with ease
and an oxygen panic and tumbling pleasure.
The algae is green, and I'm growing too;
all the birds cannot see
my kingdom down here, and the divers can't see the jaws I rule over.

I own everything.

I own the living sashes, the space creatures, the monsters,
the anglers and eels
and the sharks and the goldfish, and coral
and murals painted by shipwrecks
and the lack of humanity and the deaf octopi,
they're mine.

And somewhere on land, a clover is growing. It is its own nation.



photograph by Taylor Farrington

Thunderclouds

Sophie Fuchs

I used to know the language of the clouds. It has been a while since I lost my fluency, but every now and again, I look to the sky and take in the rhythm of my splattered friends.

We learned the names of the clouds in 4th grade—*cumulus*, *stratus*, that new one called *undulatus asperatus*—but these words have lost any meaning for me.

The names I know are the same as I have ever known: marshmallow clouds; plane-trail clouds; clouds that hang low in the sky like dropped papers; and thunderclouds, which are my favorite.

I love the charged humidity, the burning quiet that comes before. I love how sneaky they are, slithering into the already gray Portland sky, tapping their rattles before attack.

The thundercloud is a drummer, dribbling softly on the skins before EXPLODING and killing his sticks again and again.

The thundercloud is the intimidating pierced man downstage, with the rectangle tattoos and the puppy-dog eyes.

The thundercloud is the random man my friend kissed at a rock show, despite the alcohol and pot on his breath.

I like the thundercloud. I have long since lost his dialect, but sometimes, late at night, I will squeeze my mind shut, and tap along to his beat.

mixed media (opposite) by Briley Newell



What's That Sound?

Corinne Owen

There has been one time in my life when I've heard silence. I was maybe eleven years old, sleeping under four different blankets because that Colorado night was especially cold. I was dreaming, I think, but startled awake by my dad gently shaking my shoulders. Confused as to why he was waking me up from a deep sleep, I started questioning him immediately. But he didn't respond. He just moved his gloved finger into a "shhh" motion and beckoned me to follow.

To say I didn't want to go was an understatement, but nevertheless, he picked me up and carried me to the downstairs of our cabin. He had his winter coat and boots draped in his arms and asked me to put mine on. At that time, I was too drowsy to really question the absurdity of all of this, and I did it without complaint. Finally, I had bundled up, and he led me outside.

We walked down our porch steps and crunched into the snowy front yard. Even with my winter gear, that icy air crept down my neck and enveloped me in cold. When I breathed in, my throat became a freezer, and my eyes began to crystalize if I didn't blink them enough. I looked up at my father, my face transparent to my discomfort, but he just smiled. He grabbed my gloved hand and pointed it up.

And that is when I finally heard silence.

My dad motioned me to the sky, and my breath stopped. Millions upon millions of stars shone that night. There weren't any clouds or fog to distract from their brilliance, and I just stopped.

I stopped talking, I stopped worrying, and I stopped thinking about me. Looking up at that midnight blue sky with the Milky Way outlining its beautiful enormity, I realized I was just a speck on this earth. Just a young girl among billions of people and stars and trees and flowers and snowflakes, and I was in awe. It wasn't that I felt like I didn't matter anymore; on the contrary, I felt I was put here for a reason—to appreciate Earth's raw beauty without all the sounds in my life to distract. And at that moment, I stopped. And I heard silence.

Photo collage (opposite, clockwise from upper left) with works by Saffron Croker, Y'Yemaya Boyd, Melissa Baioni, Sophia Grande, Lindsey Ross, Frances Ford, Paige Derwenskus, Marguerite Trost, Vivian Herzog, Emily Myers, Bitsy Pendleton





My Window

Avery Taylor

Above the dresser in my room there is a window, transparent separation of in and out. It is small, the glass split by white dividers into nine little paintings. Each day I look out my window and there is a different picture waiting for me. Yesterday was dogs and children walking, today is a runner catching her breath at the top of the hill. What will tomorrow be? If you sit on the bed and look out, the street disappears below the frame and all you are left with is a square piece of sky. Watch it change from pitch black, pale blue, to hazy gray through the skeleton trees. In the evenings the sunset filters through my window and fills the room with colors sweeter than laughter, and at night headlights dance in and make shadow puppets on the wall. But the best time to look out of my window is when it rains. By way of weeping glass, the water meets the earth and turns everything it touches into a darker version of itself, as the birds whose melodies mimic the downpour fall silent. The raindrops look like tiny diamonds falling down to the ground, and the thunder makes the world tremble, and it is more beautiful than any sunny day. At least *I* think it is.

*photographic sequence (above) by Taylor Farrington
photograph (opposite) by Vivian Herzog*



I Once Told a Woman

Lauryn McSpadden

I once told a woman,
with a creased forehead
and fixed frown,
that autumn was the best of seasons.
With indignation she replied,
*So, you fancy the season where
everything dies?*

Flustered, nervously,
I stumble for an explanation.

Is there beauty found in death?
As the leaves change to auburn hues
and the skyline is laced with gold
Do the trees seem to stand stronger?
With a terrified pride,
do they shed their skin?

Dare I say, they seem ready, almost
giddy, brightened in the idea
of an ending.

I Choose Fire

Keely Hendricks



I love the way he thinks:
No moment is unnecessary, frivolous, gone by—
He's present, if only in himself
In those slow seconds that most of us press through
Like a viscous sludge, a miserable pause
He's thinking
We're waiting in lines, twisting our fingers,
Retracting into a void,
But he's observing, twisting his mind
Until his thoughts are bound coils, pulsing energy.

When we're whispering to the dark trace of our ears,
In the night, the blankets entangled between our knees,
I swear I can see their light, feel their heat
His eyes become pools of melting gold, his thoughts like Midas' fingers,
Grasping every inch of his beating flesh, rapacious,
Until he's as gilded as God—
I love the way he thinks out loud, ardently, breathlessly, like a prayer.
I'm always listening to his thoughts, his worship, keeping warm
And if his thoughts become fire;
You know what I've chosen
To be his fearless Joan



Hairs

Sophie Fuchs

my hair is short
and oriental black

my hair was brown first, and then there was none, until petite blonde locks
sprouted and raised their petals to the open-armed sun

my hair grew into a bob where it laid dormant until the day it decided it wanted to

be short like my dad's, only someone messed it up so it looked like my mom's and
I felt ashamed

my hair grew slowly, with the same freak blonderness until 6th grade when it turned
blue, then faded out to green without my permission, and gold again

my hair bent in crazy directions, it was blonde like sunrise, and it tickled my elbows
when I trampled through gardens to retrieve missed balls

my hair whipped behind me as I ran for my life, a frigid rigid pack of hungry
barbarians following too close and murmuring that it was just between the two of us

my hair spurted red highlights when I wanted to be alive, then blonderness when I
didn't

my hair told me I couldn't live like this anymore, so I had it cut to be like my heroine
Buffy Summers

my hair grew sideways and I sliced out bangs with one of my friends who stayed only
a little longer than our matching blue streaks

my hair decided it wanted to be white like Storm from X-Men, but someone messed
it up, and I was ashamed, and everyone kept telling me how beautiful I looked with
such long, pale hair, and I should stay blonde

my hair chose to be the galaxy, all wavy long purple pink blue, like a rock star I had
seen, and it was a beautiful shining Space Oddity

But then I chopped it all off with an old razor and my angry sword and I dyed it
'Oriental Black to Mask Those Pesky Gray Hairs' so I can be like Gerard Way, and I
own it, messy and unclear, androgynous and safe

my hair is short and oriental black

*photograph (opposite, above) by Bitsy Pendleton
monoprint, digitized (opposite) by Isabel Kennon*

I Am Not a Salad Eater

Mary Grace Kelley

I am not a salad eater. I obviously know what salad is—I'm not a caveman. Cavemen probably knew what salad was too, so never mind. I just really don't like lettuce. It's not because it's green. I don't have a prejudice against green food, that I know of. I just can't get past the texture of it. Lettuce reminds me of the times I used to eat grass for fun. It's kind of just one of those things you have to try, like dog food. I used to feed my guinea pig pieces of lettuce, but that's beside the point. I don't know if salad is just meant to be an appetizer, but I guess some people just eat it as their entire meal too. Do people actually enjoy eating salad? Maybe they are just trying to convince themselves that they are eating healthy. I've heard that most salad dressing is really unhealthy, so that just defeats the purpose of eating salad, right? If you want to feel good about yourself, I think that you should just eat celery. Celery is supposed to burn more calories chewing it than from the actual food, but that might just be an old wives' tale. I don't know what a Caesar salad is. I do know who Julius Caesar is. He was a famous Roman man, but is that why they named a salad after him? I've also heard of a Cobb salad—does that have corn in it? I do know what a salad bar is. It's the one line in the cafeteria that you don't have to wait for. Is there a limit on how many toppings you can put on salad? I wonder what the biggest salad ever made looked like. I don't know what iceberg lettuce is. I do know that the *Titanic* ran into an iceberg, and that's why it sank. Is kale considered lettuce? I've heard that stuff is really healthy. Perhaps I'll learn to love salad one day when I'm fat and have a slowing metabolism, but for now, I am not a salad eater.



I Am NOT

Lucy Massey

My mother is impatient
Ever fidgeting, adjusting, aggravating
Fiddling with something;
Even her handwriting betrays it—
Letters retraced yet i's left un-dotted.
And it is the carelessness that bothers me more—
The imprecision of her actions,
Lacking utterly
Neatness, Care, Attention to detail.
So when, on occasion, I notice
In my own work
A harmless oversight:
An imperfectly formed letter,
An over-large space between two words,
In short, evidence of a briefgap in my attention—
I leave it alone.

watercolor (detail, opposite) by Maggie Johnson

Angst

While the “Perspectives” section encourages readers to view the world through myriad lenses, the following poems do the same and more—taking the reader into situations that entail pain, duplicity, troubled memory, distance, and loss. Literary magazines by writers in their teen years often abound with verse that is troubled and self-involved, but these pieces—we feel—have more heft, pulse, and power. For instance, when the wife in “Neighbor” utters that she must lose 200 pounds, there is no angst-ridden hyperbole. Instead, her words are code for self-preservation by means of murder—morbid, grotesquely comic, and tragic. These pieces—and the art works that accompany them—demonstrate the cruelty of being silenced, marginalized, or violated. The pain is not contrived, but real.

Neighbor

Anonymous

With humid, heavy air summer nights grappled at our lungs. Jane would stand in the street, her fingers like dainty serpents coiled around a mug of wine. She spent days in lassitude, under the white sun in her frilled robe, rosy fingertips to match the passive pink pinched into her cheeks by years of submission. A lazing pet she was. Thin like cigarette smoke, frail as fish bones: “I need to lose 200 pounds,” Jane had uttered.	With humid, hellish air, days trudged by. Jane’s husband trudged by, too, with his lumbering limbs heavy as summer air, his eyes stained yellow, his body full of bitter spirit and spirits. In the day he painted murals on gymnasium walls, and at night painted arrays of blacks and blues across Jane’s face. He breathed his last breath, just two weeks back. “I need to lose 200 pounds,” Jane had uttered.
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oil on canvas (detail, opposite) by Devin Graham



Silent Call

Claire Heflin

Do the quietest people have the loudest minds?
Or is that just an excuse
for me and you
to go by
day after day
unsatisfied?

You hear
but you do not listen.
You look
but you do not see.
You touch
but you do not feel.
And right as I am about to tell you this,
I open my mouth
but I do not speak.

oil stick and tissue paper on paper (above) by Obi Ananaba

Ghost Town

Allie Chambers

A gurney rolls out of the building.
A white sheet laid peacefully on top.
A bloody hand slips out from under the sheet,
Lifeless and cold.

She ripped out her own heart.
That's what they told her parents.
She wanted to feel it beating in her hands.
That way she'd know she was alive.



oil on canvas by Callie Hubbell

Don't Talk to Me

Shelby Nutter



Don't talk to me
with my indifferent expression,
my rolling, condescending eyes,
and my lips turned down in a scowl.

Don't talk to me
with your pinched up face and
your squinting eyes, bright
with colors as fake as your laugh.

Don't talk to me
with my perfect black nails,
unkempt hair hiding my face,
and my makeup, as dark and minimal as I care.

Don't talk to me
with your friendly, expressive hands
your excited, positive attitude
and your masterfully designed face.

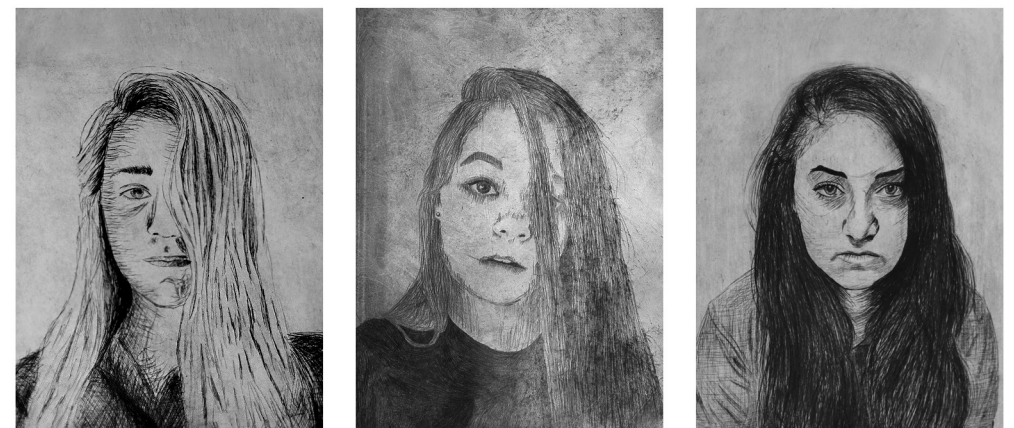
Don't talk to me
with my headphones in too loud,
my face hidden behind the pages of my shield,
and my rock music that you wouldn't get.

Don't talk to me
with your expensive heels in your Jeep—
blasting country music in the parking lot,
playing classical piano for your grandparents.

Don't talk to me
with my fictitious confidence
and my appearance to trick you
into thinking that I don't care.

Don't talk to me
But know that I know that you know
that your façade is the same as mine
and we both do actually care.

*monoprint (opposite) by Kate Griffin
graphite on paper (below) by Eliza Ossolinski,
Avery Taylor, and Adele Grohovsky*



Memories

Allie Chambers

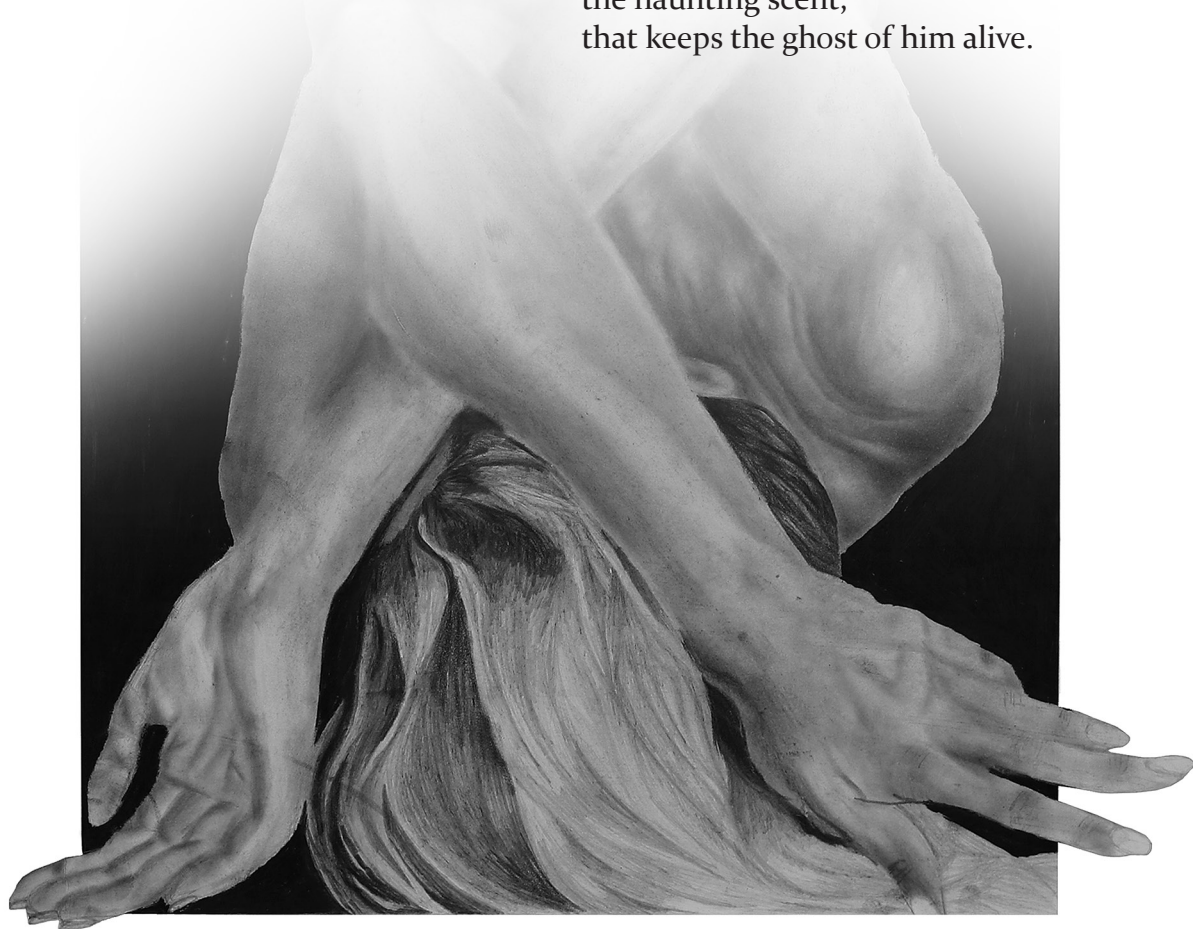
I couldn't bear to open the closet.
In its dark clutches lies
his intoxicating smell, and
I worry that if I open the door,
his cologne will dance away with the wind.

I've emptied the dresser now.
It's been almost four months since
I washed his clothes.
I washed them all,
except for his favorite sweater.
I hug it tightly at night.

I'm having trouble sleeping.
I inhale his scent from his tattered sweater,
but when I exhale,
I lose him all over again.

The sweater is beginning to lose
its scent now.
Instead of warm sandalwood,
I smell dankness, and death.

I pour his cologne onto the sweater,
hoping that it will bring back
the haunting scent,
that keeps the ghost of him alive.



charcoal & graphite on paper (detail, opposite) by Obi Ananaba
monoprint, digitized sepia (detail) by Tara Lang





Voices

At the end of the publication—after the dreams of Childhood, through the experiences gained in the World at Large, past the hurt, pain, and frustrations of Angst, all the way at the end—there is only one part that is truly essential: voice. Life leaves its particular mark on all of us, and in this case it is in the imagined voice of larger-than-life figures from politics, the entertainment industry, science, and literature. In the end, it is the evolving voice of the writer that drives the narrative, animates the words, consumes the reader, and, hopefully, transforms.

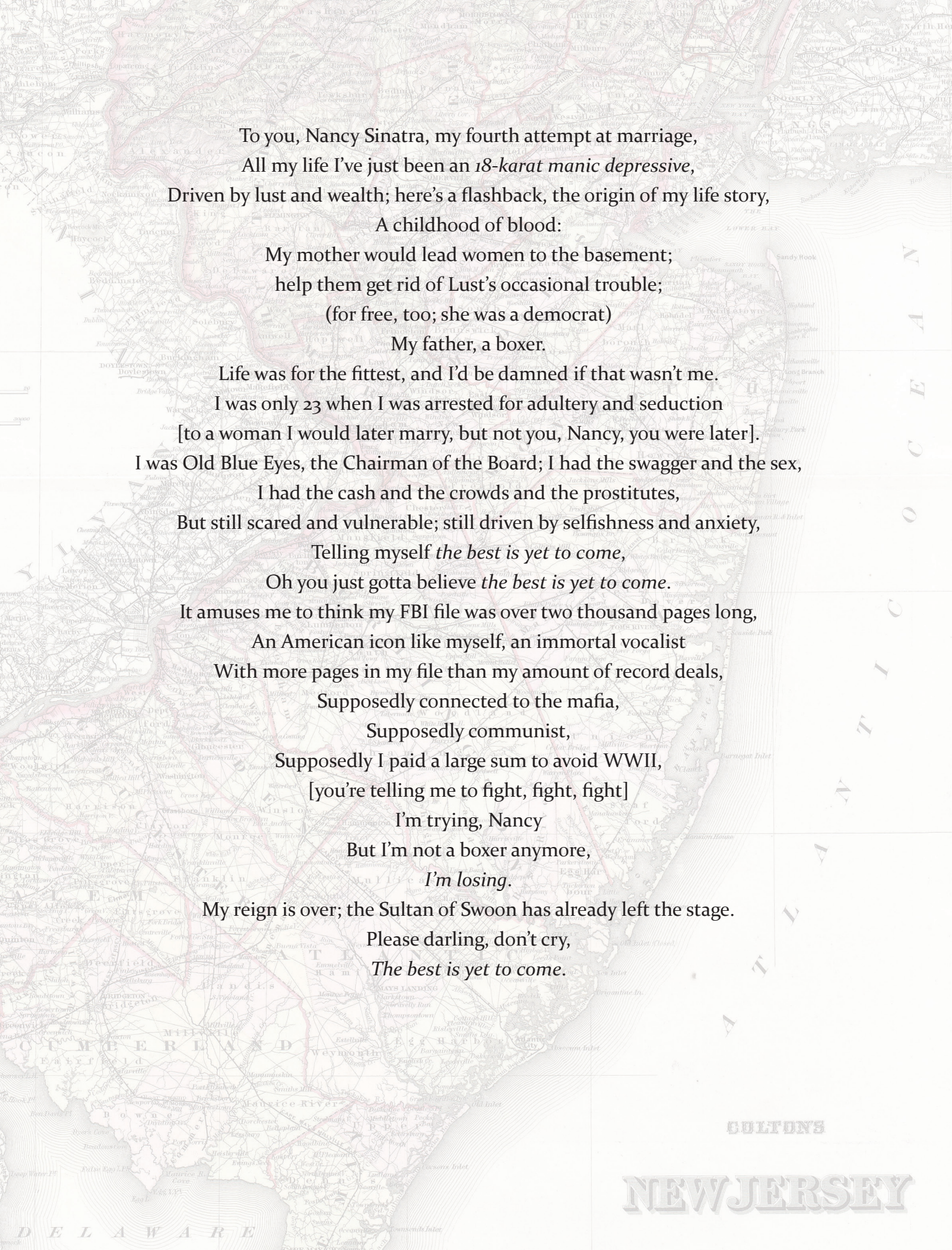
Frank

Anna Warner



I want to say this all to you, but I can't—
It's more important now than ever.
Cruelly the words can't form (only a small segment is conscious)
On my deathbed, honey, I'm losing.

mixed media collage (opposite) by Priya Patel



To you, Nancy Sinatra, my fourth attempt at marriage,
All my life I've just been an *18-karat manic depressive*,
Driven by lust and wealth; here's a flashback, the origin of my life story,

A childhood of blood:

My mother would lead women to the basement;

help them get rid of Lust's occasional trouble;

(for free, too; she was a democrat)

My father, a boxer,

Life was for the fittest, and I'd be damned if that wasn't me.

I was only 23 when I was arrested for adultery and seduction

[to a woman I would later marry, but not you, Nancy, you were later].

I was Old Blue Eyes, the Chairman of the Board; I had the swagger and the sex,

I had the cash and the crowds and the prostitutes,

But still scared and vulnerable; still driven by selfishness and anxiety,

Telling myself *the best is yet to come*,

Oh you just gotta believe *the best is yet to come*.

It amuses me to think my FBI file was over two thousand pages long,

An American icon like myself, an immortal vocalist

With more pages in my file than my amount of record deals,

Supposedly connected to the mafia,

Supposedly communist,

Supposedly I paid a large sum to avoid WWII,

[you're telling me to fight, fight, fight]

I'm trying, Nancy

But I'm not a boxer anymore,

I'm losing.

My reign is over; the Sultan of Swoon has already left the stage.

Please darling, don't cry,

The best is yet to come.

Marigolds, Blackbirds, and Galoshes

Leah Portis



*"I regret exceedingly that Washington is to be deprived
of hearing Marian Anderson, a great artist."*

Eleanor Roosevelt

There was a storm last night.

The winds of adversity blew down the songbird's nest,

landing her in the garden among the flowers

with broken stems and dangling petals

the downtrodden, the oppressed

the ones that have been battered by this storm of injustice.

But this storm cannot last forever—at some point, the clouds must clear

because the field of human rights is not one in which

compromise on fundamental principles is possible.

Spring will come, and the flowers will bloom again.

The beautiful songbird will rebuild its nest because, no matter what, no one can

make you feel inferior without your consent.

The storm may still be raging, but that's what umbrellas and galoshes are for.

It's time to go out and take a stand in the pouring rain,
because the more you hide, the more scared you get.
It's okay to get a little wet—for you'll be criticized anyway.
You'll be damned if you do, damned if you don't.

Now is not the time to take [your] place in a corner
by the fireside and simply look on.
Now is the time to take the homeless songbird under your wing,
put on your galoshes and go into the rain.
One must never, for whatever reason, turn his back on life,
for spring will come.



oil on canvas by Sophie Cudd

Russell's Brand

Abbey Snow



Born an Essex scoundrel,
mum and dad knew I would cause trouble,
so mum raised me as best she could,
and dad I only saw sporadically.

My desire for the comfort of another
only started after that one awful tutor
touched me at the tender age of seven.

The chase,
the thrill of the first touch,
the danger of the aftermath,
like drugs.
Addicting.

Eventually, it became inevitable for me to seek comfort
in the only material thing that could ever make me feel good,
drugs. Whatever I could get my hands on, really.

Not using my excess of unwanted money
for anything to help boost
the capitalist system.

One thing I've never quite understood
is the general public's inability
to take a bloody joke.

I can understand a serious or even touchy subject,
but everything must be approached with some sort of good humour,
else we risk the danger of over-solemnity.

I'll admit showing up to work the day after 9/11
dressed as Bin Laden was a tad insensitive.
And maybe reenacting the Nazi salute
at that awards ceremony was crossing some sort of line.

But, for God's sake, if I can have a right laugh
making an arse of myself on stage in front of millions,
exposing the secrets of my past struggles
—with sex, drugs, politics, you name it—
can't you have the decency to laugh
when you trip up the stairs
or even when that dog just claimed his territory
all over your new suede shoes?

The only way those bloody shoes
could mean life or death to you
is if I took the laces
and wrapped them round your neck.
You, and every other
wealthy, privileged, ironed suit, right-wing, capitalist
shell of a human being
ought to give those bloody suede shoes
to the homeless drug addict
who lives on the corner of your building.
Now see how much those shoes matter to you.

Sometimes when I close my eyes at night,
I can see the psychedelic colors,

I can still feel my head in the clouds.

I remind myself of the revolution,
taking place inside me and out.

Don't vote for those frauds and liars
we call politicians.

Revolt against capitalism,
the idea of a system that only benefits
and furthers the advantages of the economically elite.

I won't take that pill, I won't chase after that woman,
I will revolt against my every inner instinct,
and instead,
have a laugh.

*A Nice Chianti:
Sir Anthony Hopkins*

Corinne Owen



To overthink is to slowly kill oneself,
Because you can never trust the human mind;
It's a death trap.

Our existence is beyond our explanation,
Our understanding,

Yet, we're dreaming all the time.

Just beneath our skulls is a fathomless lake of unconsciousness

That is to be awakened through

New perspectives and

New people.

Now, I will cut the dramatics and say what you want to hear.

You know me as an actor, not a ruddy philosopher.

I am an actor because

I was rubbish at school,

And, by luck,

I ended up on stage.

In acting, I don't overthink.

It's not like university,

Where I tried in vain to solve the problems of fitting in.

Rather, it is a methodical process to becoming another.

I read my lines 250 times,

Exactly.

I might be a little creaky up here,

But it is a quirk that is with me forever.

Throughout the years, I picked up numerous characters,

Yet I am able to play monsters well.

I understand monsters.

I understand madmen.

Perhaps because I am

Devious

Cruel

Cunning

Addictive

Yet, I am not Hannibal Lector.

And, believe me, you don't want him inside your head.

To tell the truth,
I don't quite know what acting is, but I enjoy it.

It is not just reciting words,
It is becoming an entirely new person
Instantly.

I do wish we could chat longer ...
But I'm having an old friend for dinner.
Bye.

Tony Blair

Corinne Gibson



I grew up like a pup
Unable to be calmed, controlled, repressed.
The teachers tried to put a leash on me, unsuccessfully;

However, I ran free—
For a while.

I ran in circles for those above me,
The New Labour Party, my queen, foreign heads of state.

They called me "Bambi" at first—
For my doe-like innocence and my propensity to please.
Eloquence and captivation became my weapons,
My words lacing up situations like church shoes.

I was there when Her Majesty was not;

I stood ready to lick the wounds of my people.
Then circumstance changed, and I was no longer Bambi.
I played fetch for my superiors, landing in the rapids of controversy.
Faith proved a fickle friend, and the Bambi became the Bliar.
Landing in Iraq, I had gone astray.
Now they accuse me of being a criminal.
I ache for the days of my docility, and I paw at closed doors.
Diana was the People's Princess, I said.
I only wanted to be the People's Prime Minister.

Turing

Isabel Nygard



From birth to adolescence, I starved.
Knowledge was the one thing I craved, and I devoured every bite,
Washing it down with a drink of cold hard reality.
From adolescence through adulthood, I drowned in frightful idiocy.
But one way or another, I learned how to
Boil their stupidity into steam to make it a little more breathable.

And as I grew more, I noticed society had programmed
them all to follow a code of conduct.
Infused them with a bogus, hellish system called propriety and decorum

so that they drip with affectation,
Emanating an effluvial fog that clings to skin and penetrates to the bone.
Nobody likes it, but everybody pretends to.
Some flaunt it like a lavish perfume, saturated in its musky mask,
But it settles upon me as a salt dusting settles upon a slug,
First choking then melting then turning inside out
So that organs and vitals are bared to the world.
When that finally happens and I dissolve in their noxious system,
They will probe my dying form
soaked in preservative fluids upon a dissection plate,
Still twitching, to see what made me tick.
But I am no slug, for salt does not work on me.
I am a homosexual, which has the same effect as a slug, I suppose.
Drop me into a conversation and watch the tension rain.
I'm up to my ears in it, a perpetual bath.
Someday, though, I'll get tired of swimming
And drown once more.

They have tried to scrub away my "gross indecency"
and replace it with their decorous cologne,
But it's encoded in my DNA just as conformity is encoded into theirs.
Even if you save a few nations or a couple million lives from the storms of war,
They still see you as an outlier, insoluble in their society
Because of to whom you want to bestow your heart,
Because I am an enigma,
And I'm drowning again in their misunderstanding.

At last, it seems I tire.
I'll take one final swallow of their airs of superiority and propriety,
One final breath of bitter-almond-scented perfumes,
One final taste of a forbidden apple,
One final drink of cold hard reality:
All leading to this one final time I will drown—
Drenched in bittersweet distress.

Elie Wiesel - Now

Corinne Owen



As I write, I wonder; do I have the right to represent the multitudes that perished?
To communicate their fears and their hopes?
How does one speak of them without trembling with a heart broken for all eternity?

But I tell myself, and the rest of the world:

If we forget,
We are guilty. We are accomplices
To the suffering and humiliation.
Silence encourages the tormenter, never the tormented.
And neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim.

So I write.
Do I write not to go mad?
Or, on the contrary,
To go mad in order to understand the nature of madness?

But I write,
In the memory of my father, my mother,
Little Tzipora, too young to go.

So I write,
To pass the message
So our past won't become theirs.

Dearlly Beloved

Catherine Falls



based upon Toni Morrison's novel Beloved

The baby's hands cradled his heart
Tugged, ripped, pried with tiny, ghostly fingers
Nails digging into rust, the tobacco tin splintered beneath
The venom of the final color—a scarlet-bright fold of skin
Drying into rust on her dress

I am Beloved, and you are Paul D
Take me and my heart now, as you took me from my heart
When you banished me from her house with
A man's loud voice and echoes of white fingers on a bit
She is my heart, my Sethe, my mother
Her heartblood the pink on my gravestone
Mine, not yours—take her body, take her mouth
Take the fleshy organ that beats against your chest when you hold her at night
But you will not take the final color,
The color that left a trail, a dripping trail to the space beneath
And up into the world into my mother's arms

I will tell you a secret, Paul D,
You believe that you hold her heart with your man's touch
And your shared splintering beneath the schoolteacher's pen

Using your backs as parchment and your blood as ink
You think that you hold her, but
My heart, my Sethe, my mother
Saw the great big heart of Baby Suggs and the loving that grew too much
And sent her own heart to the safe place with me

It beats now in my chest
Not the whisper-longing of my sister nor the creaking metal of yours
Nor even the thudding sunset of Baby Suggs's
It is her—my face and a set of crystal earrings
Each sticky molasses finger and caress from my mother
To replace the parts of me that are falling-falling-sliding
Into the space beneath

Hold me to this world,
My heart, my Sethe, my mother
Hold me, and I will caress your neck
Without the iron ring of fingers that are my anchor and my burden
Hold me, and I will give you my heart.

Measure for Measure Epilogue

Catherine Falls



The wood casts shadows to the sky
The executioner's block long against the waning sun

And I, Abhorson, watch the Duke
Place his hand on Angelo's shoulder
While those princely eyes are fixed above his head
On the only angel at this killing field—the lady Isabella

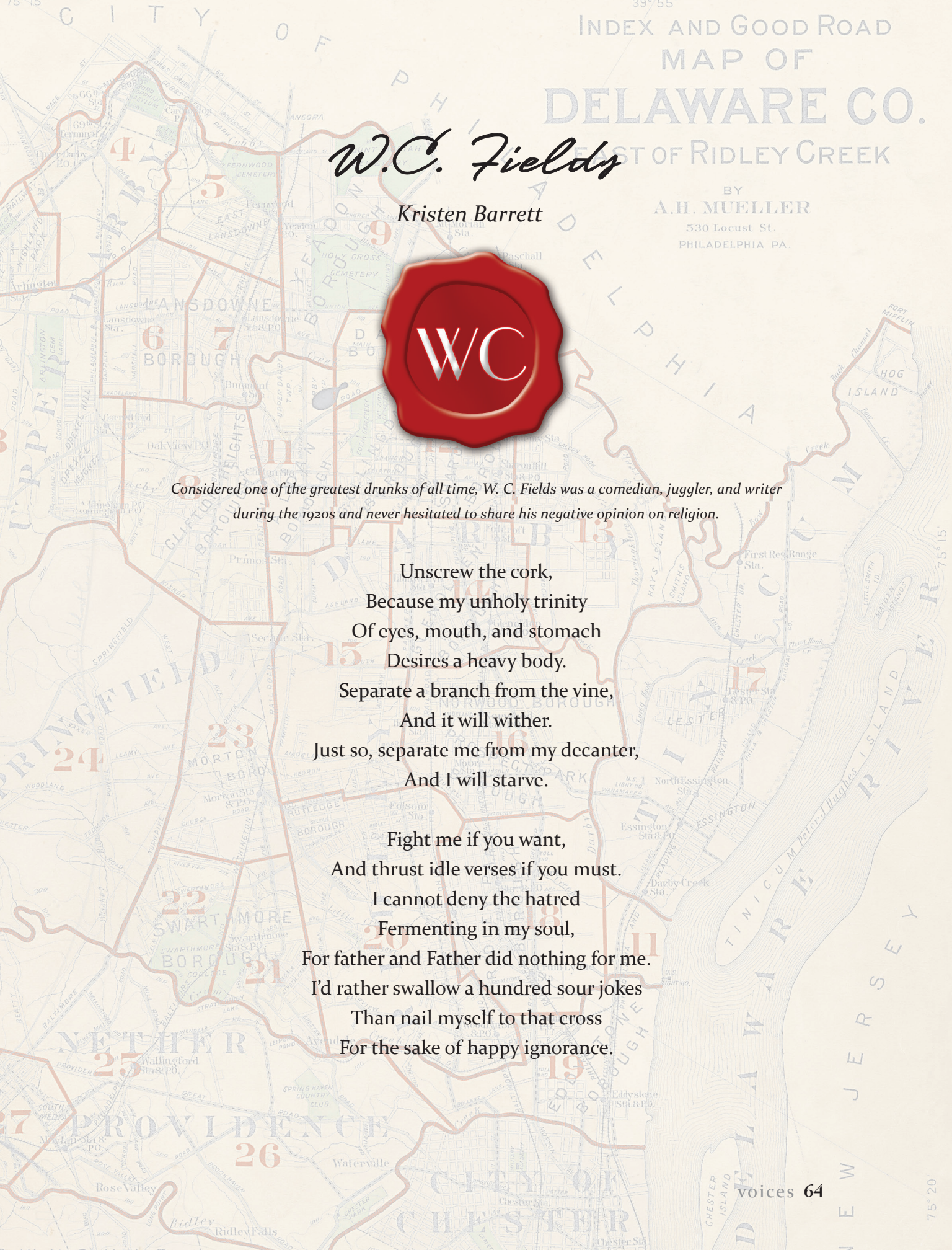
The basket at my feet is yet unweighted
By any noble head
Yet the wine-dark wood beneath my knuckles
Ends in ruby tears

And I, Abhorson, watch the Duke
Slay men more surely with his words
Than my falling ax can seal their fates
Angelo the fool is spared
(the better for me—his blood is but thawed ice,
and my steel prefers living fire)
The one wise man in this charade grins up at me
From his vantage point in the basket
The dead forfeit the foolishness of the living
Freedom from want, freedom from love,
That insidious executioner

Far below the angel stirs
And stretches out her hand toward the Duke
The basket at my feet draws my eyes downward
She, the executioner's prayer, will be fixed forever

In uncertainty
Ave Maria, may those among the dead
Remember you as this, the chaste angel
A Duke's equal

A bright silhouette against the waning sun



W.C. Fields

Kristen Barrett



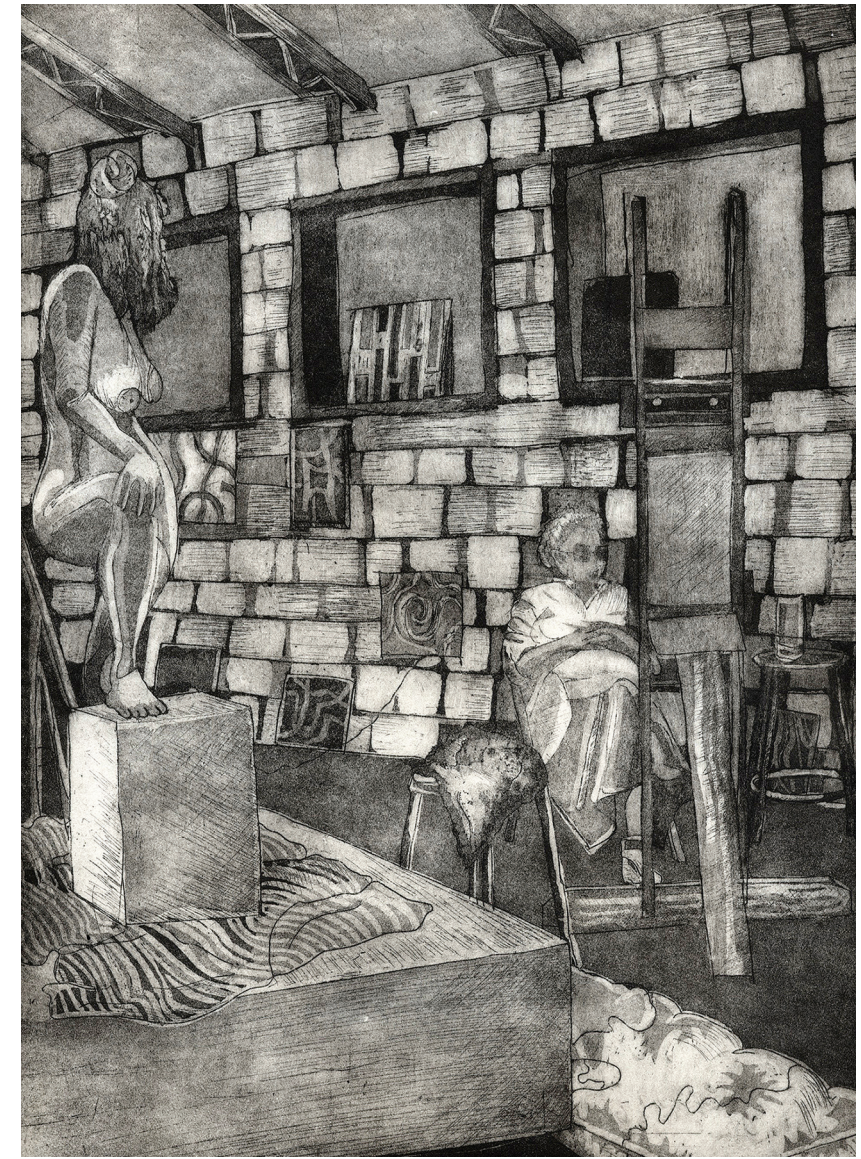
Considered one of the greatest drunks of all time, W. C. Fields was a comedian, juggler, and writer during the 1920s and never hesitated to share his negative opinion on religion.

Unscrew the cork,
Because my unholy trinity
Of eyes, mouth, and stomach
Desires a heavy body.
Separate a branch from the vine,
And it will wither.
Just so, separate me from my decanter,
And I will starve.

Fight me if you want,
And thrust idle verses if you must.
I cannot deny the hatred
Fermenting in my soul,
For father and Father did nothing for me.
I'd rather swallow a hundred sour jokes
Than nail myself to that cross
For the sake of happy ignorance.

voices 64

Watch me age
In my cellar of fame.
I'll juggle this life until
I fall asleep.
And then I'll go out with a wink.
I will only surrender
To the man in the bright nightgown.



etching by Lydia Witty

65 voices

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photograph by Lauren Bars

*If I could fit a life's worth of love into one sentence—
You know I would.*

Alex Scott

